

To Commissioner Powell and members of the Federal Communications Commission,

I am writing this letter to ask you to not proceed with the proposed rule changes to Broadcast Ownership. There are so many reasons to wait and evaluate the impact these changes will have. There is already too much consolidation in the media.

Nobody can refute the statistics and facts which show the amount of households the five large conglomerates already control. I was shocked when I learned of how few companies own the television and news I have available to me. I am concerned about the impact this will have on free speech and democracy.

I have followed closely the Senate hearings last week that pertained to the issue of media ownership. I watched a forum last week with Commissioners Adelstein and Copps. At this meeting were the spokespeople for dozens of organizations that represent thousands and thousands of concerned Americans. How can YOU ignore the thousands of letters you have received asking you to wait?

Mr. Powell, this morning you told George Stephanopolous that you had knew of many examples of having a newspaper and television station in the same city being beneficial to the local citizens. But I have heard Mr. Adelstein say several times that no study has been done to evaluate the impact on coverage that consolidation has had. Mr. Powell you always say that people "Can push that button, and change channels," but don't you admit that most of the cable and satellite channels are owned by the same five conglomerates? Even the true sources for information on the Internet are the same huge companies, that only care about profit.

I know that the two television stations here that are owned by conglomerates do not give the best possible local coverage. I have been delighted to watch a news station in Tulsa OK and one in Springfield MO because of the local activities they organize and the local investigations they conduct. The two stations in Fayetteville that are owned by conglomerates (Hearst-Argyle, and New York Times) have more commercials than they do news. The "HealthBeat at the end of each 5:00 or 10:00 news is a piped in report on some other state or usually about some quack diet, surgery, or miracle drug that is still in the research stage. I looked at the Center for Public Integrity's website and discovered the owners of my local news stations. Surprisingly the two out-of-state channels with more investigations were independently owned.

Also on the Public Integrity's website they chronicle the numerous trips and meetings Commission members have had with these large media conglomerates. Why has there been no chance for public input? Why have you felt it necessary to hold only a couple of public hearings? Why do you not care that hundreds of members of Congress (that we elected) are asking you to wait? Why can you not analyze the impact this will have on local coverage and access.

I would like to point out several troubling impacts that consolidation has already had on news coverage. The ability of people to hear all the news, and all the issues is vital to a free democracy.

1. The total lack of coverage of this topic until this week. (except C-Span and Bill Moyer's NOW on PBS)
2. Commissioner Adelstein held meetings around the country and he could not get newspapers to cover the story or notify the public of the public meetings.
3. Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VE) tried to hold a press conference

on this issue...AND NO PRESS CAME (except a reporter from Roll Call)

4. The stance taken by all US media before and during the Iraq War which was entirely pro-president/ no dissent and did not allow for any other option but what the Pentagon said.

5. A US Representative from California who was denied the ability to place a PAID advertisement for a peace protest on a radio station--owned by Clear Channel.

There are many more examples of how the views expressed and available on the television and in all media are being homogenized and consolidated. This is a trend that will affect our democracy in ways that won't be investigated by any news organization (like lots of things that won't get covered). Please do not proceed with these rule changes. Please evaluate the impact consolidation has already had. AT LEAST analyze the impacts this will have on local coverage and the other aspects of the public airways that you are supposed to protect and regulate.

Thank You